



"What Acquiring Minds Want to Know"

LaDOTD Acquirer

Volume 11, No. 1

January-March 2004

AASHTO conference, policy revisions make spring busy

Director's Report BY: Jim Dousay



In January, I attended the meeting of the AASHTO Right of Way and Utilities subcommittee in Washington, D.C. The purpose of this meeting was planning for the AASHTO Right of Way and Utilities Conference to be held in Seattle, WA, in May. Charles Hudson and I will be attending this conference and participating in the program. I will chair the session on Outdoor Advertising. This session will present three philosophies on the appraisal of outdoor advertising signs. Included on the program will be Dr. Rudy Aguilar, as well as the Wright firm of Scottsdale, AZ, and Dawain Stoops of Missouri. There should be a lot of interest in this discussion as this is a big issue nationwide. Charles will do a presentation on the Joint Plan Review meetings which he chairs. There has been a lot of interest in this concept, because many states are having problems with map revisions occurring late in the acquisition process.

Improving the process

Another big issue at the present time is utility relocation. We are working on ways to reduce delay damages caused by the need for utility relocation, especially on Urban Systems projects. On those projects, the City/State Agreement will be re-written to give cities more responsibility in this area. Also, cities will need to make certain

that the District Utility Representatives receive copies of utility agreements prior to the Federal Authorization Date before the letting.

Currently, we are working on several hot projects and the Department is depending on Real Estate to acquire the right of way and clear the utilities. There are several things we are working on that should help the acquisition process go more smoothly in the future. First, we continue working with our consultants and fine tuning that process. As I have stated before, using consultants is a definite trend nationwide and is here to stay. The main problem at this time is the timely acquisition of needed right of way under "total engineering" projects. The projects where we are using personal consultants for acquisition, for the most part, seem to be going well. In addition, LTM is now acquiring right of way on some ten projects. It takes a tremendous amount of coordination to manage consultants. One ongoing problem is the lack on qualified relocation agents.

In another area designed to improve the acquisition process, we are working on a policy to identify contaminated properties earlier in the project development process. We will be using environmental consultants in this process. The



objective of this procedure would be to have a project alignment set that would avoid contaminated sites and thus minimize the purchase of such sites.

You may have noticed a new addition to the letting list called the "Delivery Date." This is another idea being worked on to help improve the acquisition process. Eventually, the Delivery Date will be about a year ahead of the letting date. This will allow clearing and grubbing and utility relocation to take place prior to the project letting. To get to that point, the Department is budgeting to allow a 33% increase in projects for the next three years. Over that time, the gap between the Delivery Date and the Letting Date should grow to the desired year.

AARS

Xybernaut Solutions has been approved as a "sole source" contractor by the Department. This will allow them to keep making improvements to AARS. We are currently developing historic data on various types of projects, which would then receive various adjustments and thus produce a cost estimate. Two other AARS related projects that are being worked on are a utility application and a way to integrate appraisals that are now being e-mailed into AARS.

As we begin the new year of 2004, I hope it will be a good and productive year for everyone.♦

DOT releases new NHTS showing vehicles in households outnumber drivers

from www.bts.gov/press_releases/2003/

The first National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) of the 21st century, released in August 2003 by the U.S. Department of Transportation, shows vehicles in U.S. households outnumber drivers

NHTS, a joint project of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), reports:

- ☑ An average of 1.9 personal vehicles is owned or available to U.S. households — more, for the first time, than the 1.8 drivers per household.
- ☑ 90 percent of long-distance trips are made by personal vehicle.
- ☑ 17 percent of adults report having used public transit in the last two months.
- ☑ 13 percent of long distance trips over 50 miles from home to the farthest destination are for commuting to and from work.

"This landmark travel survey documents a widespread prevalence of drivers and personal vehicles in the nation," U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta said. "At the same time, it underscores some of the



challenges Americans face in their daily and long-distance travel."

NHTS, conducted in 2001 and 2002, gives a picture of travel in the U.S. at the start of the 21st century. Combining new long-distance travel information with short-distance data released earlier this year, it is the most comprehensive survey of travel in the United States in more than six years.

The NHTS collected information about a wide range of topics, including the amount and purpose of travel, the uses of different travel modes, time and miles spent traveling and the ownership and use of vehicles in the United States. It also examines the relationships between travel and specific household and demographic characteristics.

For this survey, a nationally representative sample of about 26,000 households was contacted and 60,000 individuals were interviewed.♦

Congress still debating highway bill extension

Two month extension passed at the end of February

from <http://transportation1.org/aashtnew/>

The earlier, five-month extension of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, (TEA-21) which Congress enacted last year, expired February 29. Late Friday (February 27, 2004), the Senate agreed to House language after acceding to an amendment placed in the extension by Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) that also extended the life of a commission looking into the terrorist attacks on the United States that occurred Sept. 11, 2001.



Passage of the second extension prevented severe consequences for federal agencies and for state departments of transportation. Had it not passed:

- ☑ Project lettings by states that involved federal funds would have been halted. Any slowdown of project lettings at this most active period of contract awards would have cost thousands of jobs nationwide.
 - ☑ States would have faced even greater uncertainty about federal funding, affecting project planning both short- and long-term.♦
- ☑ All employees of the Federal Highway Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration would have been furloughed, and agency operations would have ceased at midnight Sunday. The agencies are funded by the Highway Trust Fund, and without an extension there was no authority for continued operations.
 - ☑ All federal reimbursements to states, amounting to millions of dollars a day, would have halted. States would have been required to find some way to "float" the payments they must make to contractors, in the absence of the federal money they were owed.
 - ☑ No new project approvals could have been issued, since the federal agencies would not have been in operation.
 - ☑ Motor carrier inspections by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration officials would have halted, including inspections of trucks at U.S. border crossings.

Engineering Conference attracts many, including five from Real Estate

More than 1,600 people from 25 states attended the 2004 Louisiana Transportation Engineering Conference held February 15-18 at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center in Baton Rouge, which had as its theme "Transportation – Louisiana's Road to Economic Development. The event is held on a biennial basis to foster a better relationship and understanding among DOTD, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the transportation industry. The conference is the only such statewide gathering of transportation infrastructure professionals aimed at their continued education and improved professionalism.

The conference included forty-one technical sessions, over 123 technical presentations and eight "How to Clinics" covering a host of topic areas.

Attending from the Real Estate Section were Pam Leon, Lloyd Scallan, Jack Shaffer, Harvey Blanchard, and Terry Kleinpeter. They each attended several of the technical sessions. In addition, Pam did a presentation on AARS in one of the sessions. The presentation prompted several requests from Road Design employees to be connected to AARS due to the information it provides.

The attendees from Real Estate agreed that the speaker at the closing luncheon, Mike Tidwell, whose presentation was about coastal erosion, did an excellent job.♦

Technology will be affecting the way you drive (Maybe sooner than you think)

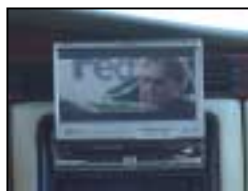
"Smart cars" are on the horizon

from www.aarp.org/bulletin/yourlife/Articles/

A new generation of technology is emerging that's going to change the driving experience for millions of motorists, young and old alike. Instead of relying on your wits to maneuver through the chaos of traffic, you'll soon have an impressive array of high-tech gadgets to make driving a whole lot more fun—and, at least in theory, safer.

Drivers of certain luxury cars are now getting a glimpse of what the future holds for average motorists. They're tooling around in vehicles that instantly respond to voice commands—"Radio on," for example. Or that get navigation help from satellites. Or that display e-mails from home or offer shopping tips.

Safety-minded motorists soon will drive cars equipped with sensors, video cameras and other equipment that can "predict" accidents before they happen, giving the driver crucial seconds to take evasive action. Already, some vehicles



automatically manage your brakes should your car be in danger of skidding out of control. Others briefly take over steering when you're in a perilous situation.

Gadgetry even more exotic is on the way. Now being tested are headlights that see around corners and windshields that display warning information if a collision is imminent. "These systems will encourage good driving behavior," says Raymond Resendes, a U.S. Department of Transportation engineer who works on "intelligent vehicle" technology.

Surprisingly, most of these systems are already standard or options on some luxury vehicles in the \$40,000 - \$80,000 range. How fast such systems start appearing in less expensive cars will depend, of course, on how popular they turn out to be with the public. ♦

High-Tech Vehicles—What's Coming; What's Already Here

Certain models of BMW, Cadillac, Honda, Jaguar, Lexus and Mercedes now offer, or soon will offer, a dizzying array of high-tech features:

- ☑ Collision-warning systems that use a computerized voice, sound or light to alert the driver to a possible frontal or rear crash.
- ☑ Cruise control that maintains a safe speed and distance between vehicles, automatically slowing or accelerating as needed.
- ☑ Global positioning systems, wireless technology and call centers that enable drivers to call a virtual or human adviser for help in reaching a destination or locating the nearest ATM, gas station or hospital.
- ☑ Night vision systems that use technology developed by the U.S. military to display see-through infrared images on the windshield to warn the driver of approaching obstacles.

Voice control systems that allow the driver to "talk" to the car. Drivers push a voice-activation button on the steering wheel and give simple commands such as "Temperature. 70 degrees." Or "Radio on." A computerized voice "talks back" and confirms the command.

Even spare tires could be a thing of the past . . .

from www.betterroads.com/articles/

Spare tires could be a thing of the past, according to a report from Michelin. Its new Pax system can run flat and tells the driver that it needs repair — all without wires. Using a hard-rubber support ring, the steel-belted radial can be driven up to 120 miles at 50 miles per hour. The tire is already in use in France and elsewhere in Europe. Goodyear licensed the

technology and reports that it will first appear in the U.S. on a Rolls Royce model.

Michelin also makes its ZeroPressure tire, which can be driven up to 50 miles at 55 miles per hour. A low tire-pressure system alerts the driver to the



problem once the tire begins losing pressure. Special crown modifications provide positive handling and vehicle control even during zero-pressure driving. Sidewall reinforcement gives self-supporting strength at zero pressure. ♦

Maybe we need "smart cars"

LOUISIANA FACTS: (For the year 2002)

from <http://ladotnet/const/qcmap/>

- ☑ From 1996 to 2002, over 900 people each year have been killed in traffic crashes Louisiana. 7 yrs x 900 deaths = 6,300 people killed in just 7 yrs!
- ☑ In Louisiana, approximately 33% of the total fatalities for 15 to 20 year olds are from traffic crashes.
- ☑ Nationally, 41% of traffic fatalities are alcohol related – in Louisiana, it is 47%.
- ☑ 4 In 2002, 1267 Louisiana drivers were convicted of their second offense (or more) of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI).
- ☑ Tailgating, or following too closely to the vehicle in front, has been identified as contributing to almost 45% of all the crashes on Louisiana highways in 2001.
- ☑ In Louisiana, 64% of drivers killed in traffic crashes were reported as not using a safety restraint system (seat belt or child safety seat).
- ☑ In 2002, Louisiana ranked 4th highest in the nation for the number of fatalities sustained in collisions at public highway-rail grade crossings.
- ☑ Pickup trucks and vans account for over 36% of vehicles involved in fatal traffic crashes.
- ☑ Large trucks and buses account for almost 14% of vehicles involved in fatal traffic crashes.

Miscellaneous Interstate system facts

from www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/

In the contiguous 48 States and the District of Columbia, 62 main one- or two-digit numbered routes have been assigned. Of these, 27 are in a primarily east-west alignment and therefore carry an even number. Another 35 routes are odd-numbered because of their primarily north-south alignment. Although 261 auxiliary circumferential, spur, and radial routes are designated, only 151 three-digit numbers have been assigned. This is because three-digit numbers can be used in more than one State.



The five longest Interstate routes, each more than 2,000 miles, are east-west routes. These are:

1. I-90, 3,020.54 miles, from Seattle, Washington, to Boston, Massachusetts,
2. I-80, 2,899.54 miles, from San Francisco, California, to Teaneck, New Jersey,
3. I-40, 2,555.40 miles, from Barstow, California, to Wilmington, North Carolina,
4. I-10, 2,460.34 miles, from Los Angeles, California to Jacksonville, Florida, and
5. I-70, 2,153.13 miles, from Cove Fort, Utah, to Baltimore, Maryland.



Among the 2-digit Interstate routes, the five shortest are:

1. I-73, 12.27 miles, Emery to Greensboro, North Carolina
2. I-97, 17.62 miles, Annapolis to Baltimore, Maryland
3. I-99, 53.00 miles, Bedford to Bald Eagle, Pennsylvania
4. I-19, 63.35 miles, Nogales to Tucson, Arizona
5. I-66, 74.80 miles, Strasburg, Virginia to Washington, D.C.



The shortest Interstate route segment is I-95 in the District of Columbia which is 0.11 mile long.

The Interstate System connects 45 of the 50 State capitals, as well as the Nation's Capital, Washington, D.C. The five State capitals not directly served by the Interstate System are Juneau, Alaska; Dover, Delaware; Jefferson City, Missouri; Carson City, Nevada; and Pierre, South Dakota.

The oldest Interstate segments actually predate the establishment of the Interstate system. Early example includes a portion of the Grand Central Parkway in Queens, New York, which was opened to traffic in July 1936, and later was incorporated into the Interstate System as I-278. Other freeways and toll roads were incorporated into the System under the 1956 Act, as an alternative to building new competing Interstate routes. ♦

As baby boomers move to retirement; older driver safety is a big issue

from www.betterroads.com/articles/feb04

Roadway improvements that make driving easier and safer for older drivers need to be fast-tracked to prepare for a population that will double over the next 30 years. While overall traffic fatalities have remained relatively constant over the past 10 years, the number of older drivers killed on our nation's highways has been on the rise. The desire to maintain a mobile lifestyle means more Americans are driving longer as they age. And they are driving more.

Some horrific accidents involving older drivers recently brought unhappy attention to the subject. Demographic trends, which estimate that one of five Americans will be 65 or older by 2030, create a growing sense of urgency.



As we age, certain tasks associated with driving become more difficult. Declining or impaired eyesight is the most common problem. Other factors such as slower reaction time, diminished

cognitive ability, and reduced muscle dexterity can make driving more challenging and even hazardous. When we get older, we also get more fragile, which is a major reason why so many older driver crashes lead to fatalities.

A number of roadway improvements make driving easier and safer for older drivers. Improvements such as better intersection design, wider lanes and shoulders, improved lighting, better markings, and more visible signs with larger lettering are included.

Changes to aid older drivers are in order not only to improve safety and reduce fatalities, but also to better serve this key segment of the road-user constituency and to continue their access to mobility. The older population has grown up as a 'driving' group and more than 70% of them are aging in place, in suburban and rural areas where there simply aren't alternatives to the private vehicle.

Based primarily on the Federal Highway Administration Highway Design Handbook for Older Drivers and Pedestrians, The Road Information Program (TRIP) recommended the following older driver safety improvements:

Intersections:

Bright, luminous lane markings, overhead indicators for turn lanes, overhead street signs, adding or widening left-turn lanes.

Streets and highways:

Wider lanes and shoulders to reduce the consequences of driving mistakes, longer merge and exit lanes, rumble strips to warn motorists of run off, curves that are not as sharp, improvements to pedestrian features at intersections, improved intersection design, improved standards for acceptable stopping and reaction sight distances.

Signs and lighting:

Clearer and less complex signage that is easier to follow, larger lettering on signs and larger pavement markings, better street lighting, particularly at intersections.

☑ Facts about older drivers ☑

- ☑ Older driver fatalities increased by 27% between 1991 and 2001 compared to an overall fatality increase of about 2%.
- ☑ The number of licensed drivers 70 and older increased 32% to 19.1 million in the same period.
- ☑ The average older driver in 2001 spent about 37 minutes a day driving, compared to about 29 minutes in 1995, a 28% increase, and drove 15.3 miles a day compared to 12.7 miles a day, a 20% increase.
- ☑ The older segment of the population is growing twice as fast as the rest of the population.
- ☑ In 2001, half of all older driver fatalities occurred at intersections, while 23% of younger driver fatalities (drivers 69 and younger) occurred at intersections.
- ☑ Left-hand turns are more problematic for older drivers.
- ☑ Small or complex signs may be misunderstood or not seen quickly enough by older drivers.

The politics of eating an Oreo

from www.usnews.com/usnews/politics/whispers/archive/

Yummy Oreos turn out to be the bipartisan snack of choice among Republicans and Democrats. But Republicans and Democrats tend to eat an Oreo in vastly different ways. Thanks to Oreo's national quiz asking Americans how they eat the cookie, we learn that the country is divided into four groups: twisters, lickers, biters, and dunkers.



One key finding: Sen. Jon Corzine, (D-NJ), is a dunker. He prefers milk, as do most dunkers. Corzine's membership in the Dunker Club, which makes up about 20 percent of the country, is typical in that they hail from the Northeast and make lots of money. But he won't like this detail. Dunkers tend to be Republicans, and Corzine isn't just a Democrat but head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Meanwhile, biters come from the South, are more likely to characterize themselves as independents, and tend to make the least amount of money. Twisters have the highest percentage of Democrats, with many residing on the West Coast. ♦

St. Patrick's Day

Shamrock's and Wearin' of the green

from www.tartanplace.com/saintpatrick/scustom/

The three leaf clover or seamóg became a symbol of Ireland and was worn by the Irish regiments of the Queen's Army. When it became an emblem of rebellion in the 19th century, Queen Victoria outlawed wearing it and made it punishable by death by hanging. It was referred to as the *Wearing of the Green*. The



Wearing of the Green originally hailed springtime. The Immortals or faeries wore it in the great legends and green clothes attracted faeries and helped crops since it was the color of the earth.

Green clothes are worn in the United States, but not in Ireland because of the upsetting reminder. Today the *seamróg* joins the *English Rose* and the *Scottish Thistle* on the British flag and is an integral part of Saint Patrick's Day celebrations. ♦

Easter

Running out of Easter Bunnies?

from www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml

Eight hundred volunteer wildlife watchers will be deployed throughout Germany in March in a giant rabbit count aimed at giving the clearest picture yet of the nation's endangered bunny population. Coordinated by leading scientific institutes, volunteers will count the rabbits one hour after nightfall when they come out to feed, said Armin Winter, animal conservation expert from the German Hunting Protection League.

In contrast to countries like Australia, where rabbits have multiplied at an explosive rate and have long been viewed as pests, the fluffy creatures are on the list of endangered species in Germany. Industrialization and intensive farming has depleted their natural habitat.

"Watchers will each cover a planned route with powerful spotlights to seek out the rabbits. The light reflects off their eyes, making them easily identifiable," Winter said.

The 100,000 euro (\$122,000) project is expected to show a rise in the rabbit population because a mild climate in 2003 helped more baby rabbits to survive. ♦





“Quotable”

“Always do more than what is required of you.” – George S. Patton

“It is right to be content with what we have, but never with what we are.” - Sir James Macintosh

“The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.” - James Madison

“A fanatic is one who won't change his mind and won't change the subject.”- Winston Churchill

“If a million people believe a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing.” - Anatole France

“I am a marvelous housekeeper. Every time I leave a man I keep his house.” - Zsa Zsa Gabor

“Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens.” - Jimi Hendrix

“Denial ain't just a river in Egypt.” - Mark Twain

“A smile is the curve that sets everything straight.” – Phyllis Diller

“Don't use time or words carelessly. Neither can be retrieved.” - H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

